

(Washington, DC) – Today, Rep. Charlie Wilson (OH-6) voted to pass two bills that will improve the ability of the United States to prevent and respond to oil spills. These two pieces of legislation will enhance research for oil spill prevention and cleanup and provide the necessary research to ensure safer, cleaner oil and gas drilling technologies. Together, these bills represent a comprehensive research agenda to enhance U.S. preparedness for future oil spills.

“Workers’ lives, public safety, our environment’s health and even our economy’s well-being are at stake when it comes to disasters as big as the current oil spill in the Gulf. The BP disaster has once again demonstrated the results of insufficient oversight. Clearly we need safer drilling technologies and a better way to clean up after disastrous oil spills. The two bills we passed today will help. I’m pleased Congress has acted so quickly.” said Wilson.

The Oil Pollution Research and Development Reauthorization Act, ensures the ongoing development of new technologies and methods to prevent, recover, and respond to oil spills. The bill also provides for robust oversight and accountability of the interagency research and development program. Furthermore, this legislation sets up a more efficient federal management structure. More specifically, the bill updates and improves the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

The Safer Oil and Natural Gas Drilling Technology Research and Development Act will make oil and gas drilling safer by supporting research and development of technologies and practices for worker and environmental safety, as well as accident prevention and mitigation. More specifically, the bill amends Section 999 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 which authorized the Secretary of Energy to establish an Ultra-Deepwater and Unconventional Onshore Natural Gas and Other Petroleum Resources research and development program. Some of the areas that will be researched include enhanced well control and integrity, blowout prevention devices, secondary control systems for well shut-off, technologies for accident mitigation, decision-making and risk management, and equipment testing for extreme conditions.

“These two bills help to ensure the federal government, industry, and academia are all better equipped to prevent and respond in the future,” said Science and Technology Committee Chairman Bart Gordon (D-TN).

Wilson serves on the House Science and Technology Committee.

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